

EDITORIAL

## THAT “NOBLE WAGING OF THE CLASS STRUGGLE”

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**HE streets of Boston are just now the theatre of a deal of turbulence. Ostensibly the trouble is a conflict between the Team Drivers' Union and the R.S. Brine Transportation Company. Between whom the conflict really is the following dramatic incident discloses. It is taken from a write-up of the situation in the *Boston Post* of January 23:

“The dramatic incident of the day occurred near Central wharf. One of the Brine four-horse drays came along Atlantic avenue on the morning trip. It was just in the midst of the excitement and a jam of teams filled the street. Following the team and lined about the street were fully 1,500 people. Near Central wharf the driver got into a serious jam—truck after truck blocked the way, team after team turned in front of him, cut off his horses and he was helpless.

“With shouts and yells the mob surrounded them. His police patrol was not sufficient to keep them off. The driver loosened his hold on the reins and waited. Suddenly one venturesome youth leaped on the truck, and with one swoop tore the driver's coat up the back. This was a signal. Stones, mud and ice began to fly through the air. Ten and 15 deep around the team, the mob hissed and swore at the driver, calling him every name that could arise to the tongue.

“‘Scab, scab.’

“‘Why don't you be a man?’

“‘Ain't the union good enough for you?’

“‘Shame on you.’

“The driver dropped his reins. He got up from the seat and looked at the sea of faces around him.

“‘Why don't I join the union?’ he yelled.

“‘Yes, you miserable scab.’

“‘I'll tell you why not,’ his voice rang out fiercely. ‘I'll tell you why not. By God, this is the first job I've had for four months.’

“Howls of derision broke from the mob.

“‘I've got to work, d——you. I've got a wife in the hospital. She's dying. I've got two babies at home. How am I going to feed them? Good God,

do you want them to starve? I've tramped Boston over for a job, and now I've got it, and by God, I'm going to keep it.'

"As he spoke the tears formed a stain down the side(s) of his cheeks.

"Smash—a slushball flattened against his check and trickled down his face. That was the crowd's answer to his appeal."

Is this a conflict between Capital and Labor? The "No!", with which the question must be answered, can not be too thunderous.

When it is considered that this Teamsters' Union stands upon the principle of "brotherly relations between Capital and Labor;" when it is further considered that this Teamsters' Union joins the capitalist class on election day to keep up the labor-displacing capitalist system;—when all this is considered the fact becomes obvious that the conflict above described is not a conflict between Capital and Labor. The conflict is a three-cornered fight, conducted wholly upon the capitalist plane. The combatants are:

First, the employer;

Second, the Union, which—by proclaiming the brotherhood of Capital and Labor, and upholding the capitalist system—, strips itself of all title to the term "Labor,{}" and sets itself up as a mere competitor with the employer for the spoils of society; and

Third, the non-Union man, who in this drama, or farce, fills the role of the "bucket-shop," or "wild cat," or "curbstone" speculator. Unable to squarely compete with the capitalist concerns, these "curbstone" concerns set themselves up wherever they can; are nuisances to the "regular" concerns just above them; but are ever and anon found to be doing the bidding of the plutocratic banker. And so with the wretched non-Union man, as the species is depicted by the above description in the person of the man against whose face slush-balls are flattened by the irate fellow competitors of Brother Capital.

Such a distressful picture is the direct result of the perverse education instilled by the pure and simple, or British style of Unionism; and the evil is encouraged by the rabble-rout of "intellectuals," that, some times styling themselves "Reformers," other times "Social Democrats," and generally known as "Multi-cocoas," bestow their pontifical blessing upon the mischief by pronouncing it a "noble waging of the class struggle."

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

Uploaded August 2006